



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 17 May 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
17 MAY 1968

1. South Vietnam

The enemy continues to step up the military tempo in the Central Highlands with mortar attacks and ground probes. There are signs that Communist forces in other areas of South Vietnam are gearing up for further offensive activity. This might be timed to coincide with Ho Chi Minh's birthday on 19 May.

2. Lebanon-Israel

The Lebanese are jittery following Israel's shelling of a village last Sunday. For domestic reasons, Lebanon is reluctant to stop Arab terrorists based in Syria from transiting Lebanese territory. As the Syrians increase their infiltration activities, Israel's punitive attacks against Lebanon are likely to increase.

3. Arab States -
Israel

Gunnar Jarring is back in New York, where he hopes to arrange talks among the disputing parties, but the outlook for his mission remains bleak.

The Egyptians stick to their stand that they will not negotiate in the same room with the Israelis. For their part, the Israelis still insist on face-to-face talks.

Jarring indicates that if meetings cannot be arranged within "some weeks," he will have to hand the Arab-Israeli hot potato back to the Security Council.

4. Czechoslovakia

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5. Pakistan -
Soviet Union

While Pakistani defense officials say the Soviet Union has offered a "few" SU-7 ground attack aircraft, we think it doubtful that there is a firm commitment. When Kosygin visited Rawalpindi last month, he suggested

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that he had met Pakistani requests with only a vague promise.

The Soviets want to protect their good relations with India. They also are trying to promote a better atmosphere between India and Pakistan. Providing such military hardware to Pakistan would hardly seem the way to meet these goals.

Some dividends would accrue, however. The Chinese position in Pakistan would be undercut, and the Soviets would be better able to assure a stiff Pakistani attitude toward the Peshawar facility.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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New Charges of Intensified US Bombing: In its 16 May Vietnamese language broadcast to South Vietnam, Hanoi made its latest charge of intensified US bombings in the area south of the 20th parallel. The broadcast listed a long series of civilian targets and population centers that the US had "wantonly

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bombed" and noted that this was occurring even though the US had begun official talks in Paris. It was claimed, however, that the air defense network in the southern part of the country has been highly successful in countering US air activity and that the people are determined to keep on fighting the US "shoulder to shoulder" with their southern brothers.

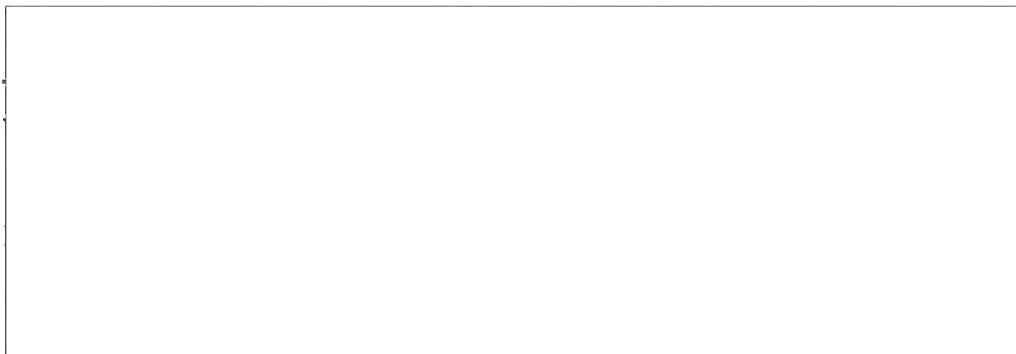
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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Cites Antiwar Activities by US Servicemen: Hanoi has publicized a long list of antiwar actions it claims US servicemen have taken over the past several months. Broadcast in English on 15 May, the list includes riots, desertions, and sabotage. Some servicemen are even said to have "disabled themselves" to avoid serving in Vietnam.

The broadcast charged that more than 10,000 young Americans had fled abroad rather than be sent to Vietnam, and that additional thousands were forming antiwar organizations. Particular emphasis was placed on the claim that many of the protesting servicemen were Negroes who were also demanding the practice of racial equality in the service. One "black soldier" who refused to go to the Far East to "become cannon fodder" was quoted as saying he should stay in the US to fight for the freedom of the Afro-Americans.

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